

Your Ref :
Our Ref : CIRD5/2-05



30 Dec 2006

The Editor
The Straits Times
Forum Page

100 High Street
#07-01 The Treasury
Singapore 179434
www.psd.gov.sg

Job is exacting but officers have good careers

We refer to your article "Don't knock us, our rice bowls are not iron" (ST, 16 Dec).

The need to make career transitions is not unique to the Administrative Service and the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). In the private sector, career transitions due to restructuring, consolidation, mergers and acquisitions are increasingly becoming common place. The challenges faced by those making career transitions after having risen to senior levels over a number of years in the same organisation, are similar whether they are from the private or public sectors.

There is indeed no iron rice bowl in the Civil Service and the SAF. The Administrative Service and the SAF, nonetheless, offer an attractive, challenging and fast-paced career that spans twenty to thirty years, for capable, energetic and innovative individuals who want to serve Singapore and Singaporeans.

Our top officers come into the system knowing how it works, including the fact that there are term appointments for top jobs. Career progression is based strictly on work performance and the potential to do higher level jobs. Able Administrative Officers and military officers rise to take on senior appointments with the most outstanding taking on the top positions. Under performers are managed out. So every officer has to pull his weight and prove his worth.

In addition, timely leadership renewal ensures that the Civil Service and the SAF remain nimble, progressive and responsive to the demands of the changing environment. This is not so different from what is happening in the private sector - there is no guarantee that a person can stay on in senior or top level jobs indefinitely.

THE SINGAPORE
PUBLIC SERVICE:
INTEGRITY
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE

We have fair and transparent systems in the public service to chart career paths that will meet the aspirations of our officers. They get a competitive remuneration package, systematic development and training opportunities, and exposure to a wide range of jobs and experiences.

Hence, by the time a senior officer leaves, he would have had a full and satisfying career, departing with good release benefits, and a wealth of experience. In fact, the Public Service continues to tap on the experience of some of these retired top officers in relevant assignments, even after their retirement.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Ong Toon Hui
Director, Leadership Development
Public Service Division
Prime Minister's Office

COL Benedict Lim
Director, Public Affairs
Ministry of Defence